

# Aylesbury Town Council's Allotment News

Winter 2023



**AYLESBURY  
TOWN COUNCIL**

## Happy New Year!

It's so uplifting to see the results of everyone's labour on the allotments coming to fruition. After walking round the plots last year, the variety of produce on the new owners plots as well as the more established ones has been amazing!

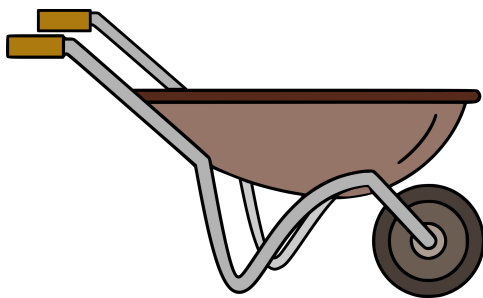
You, as plot holders, are integral to any success. Please keep your plots, sheds and greenhouses neat and tidy. The allotments are our special place so let's make it a place to be proud of.

Thanks to all who've contributed to previous newsletters, much appreciated. Please don't hesitate in sending us articles, recipes, photo for future newsletters to:

[kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk)

We also have an allotment Facebook page which is a closed group so only our members can see us! Please do join, it's so nice that we can swap ideas and communicate:

[facebook.com/groups/atcallotmentholders](https://facebook.com/groups/atcallotmentholders)



## Allotment Inspection Dates

Allotment plot main inspections will be carried out during **February May, August and November.**

The officers carrying out the inspection will be looking at the condition of the plot, cultivation, rubbish surrounding the plot and the general maintenance.



## Seed Library

As you may have already seen, seed libraries have been placed at each allotment site. The benefits of a seed lending library are many: it is a way to have fun, build community with fellow gardeners, and support people who are new to the world of gardening. It also preserves rare, open-pollinated or heirloom seeds and encourages gardeners to save quality seeds that are suitable for their local growing area.

We would ask for allotment tenants to share any seeds that they have surplus of, but also ask if anyone that borrows seeds, that they could aim to return some seed at the end of the season for the community to grow the following year.

Anyone can use the seed library and borrow seeds to grow. It is not a requirement to deposit seeds, but the more seeds we can save, the more sustainable the library will be. As seed is a living thing, it must be renewed each year or unique varieties can become extinct. Even growing one variety and returning one seed to the library is a valuable contribution.

A reminder to those tenants who would like to receive their newsletters by email, please send your email address to [kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Composting

Some common composting tips:

**Green:** Grass clippings; soft, leafy plants including annual weeds; fruit and vegetables, uncooked kitchen waste.

**Brown:** prunings and hedge trimmings (ideally shredded), woodchip, leaves, paper and card (torn up or shredded), straw, and plant stems.

Turning the heap adds air; air is necessary for composting to occur. If the heap is too wet or becomes compacted, then the composting process is slower as less air is available.

### When is the compost ready?

Garden compost can take between six months and two years to reach maturity. Mature compost will be dark brown, with a crumbly soil-like texture and a smell resembling damp woodland. Nitrogen comes from lush, green material such as grass clippings. Carbon comes from brown material such as woody stems and cardboard. You can also add eggshells, natural fibres like cotton or wool, wood ash – but not too much.

**Don't add** Diseased plants • Perennial weeds • Cooked food • Citrus (slow to rot and very acidic, which reduces worm activity) • Raw meat • Dairy products • Gloss or colour-printed paper • Ash from coal fires • Cat or dog faeces

## How we manage non-cultivated plots

Often plots aren't cultivated for a variety of reasons, so we try and work with plot holders to get them into a cultivated state. If you suffer from ill-health or there are other reasons why you can't tend your plot, please let us know. We would rather work with tenants to ensure that they can keep their plot if they wish, rather than remove them for non-cultivation.

On average we remove 20 tenants each year but work with many more to get plots back into an acceptable state. If you are having difficulty tending your plot, speak to others on site who may help or let us know by emailing [kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Sunflower Competition

Do you think you could grow the tallest sunflower? Enter our Sunflower Competition for a chance to win a £50 voucher.

The seeds for the competition will be left in the Seed Libraries at each site from 1 March. Sow your seeds and watch them grow! We will measure them from Monday 28 August.

Your sunflower will only be measured if you enter through our [online form](#) or by emailing [kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kim.colbeck@aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk) or calling 01296 425678. Entries close 31 March.

There is an adult and child (up to 17 years) category.

The top prize for each category is a £50 voucher and trophy and the 'middle sunflower' wins a £25 voucher and trophy. For example, the middle sunflower would be the 30th tallest in a competition with 60 entrants.

Visit <https://bit.ly/ATCSunflower2023> to enter via our online form.

Best of luck!



Thank you to those who entered our Scarecrow Competition in October.